

FLASHPOINT CHICAGO

A CAMPUS OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE HOLLYWOOD

Five Rules for Effectively Following Up

Rule 1: Be Overly Polite and Humble

It seems obvious enough, but a lot of people take it personally when they don't hear back from someone right away. Resist the urge to get upset and never take your feelings out in an email, saying something like, "You haven't responded yet," or "You ignored my first email." Just maintain an extremely polite tone throughout the entire email thread. Showing that you're friendly and that you understand how busy your contact may be is a good way to keep him or her interested.

Rule 2: Persistent Doesn't Mean Every Day

Sending a follow-up email every day doesn't show you have initiative or passion, it shows you don't respect a person's time. The general rule of thumb is to give at **least a week** before following up. Any sooner, and it might come off as pushy; let too much time pass, and you risk the other person not having any clue who you are. Start off with an email every week, and then switch to every couple of weeks.

Rule 3: Directly Ask if You Should Stop Reaching Out

If you've followed up a few times and still haven't heard back, it's worth directly asking if you should stop following up. After all, you don't want to waste your time, either. You could say, "I know how busy you are and completely understand if you just haven't had the time to reach back out. But I don't want to bombard you with emails if you're not interested. Just let me know if you'd prefer I stop following up." Most people respect honesty and don't want to waste someone's time, and they'll at least let you know one way or another.

Rule 4: Stand Out in a Good Way

If done well, a little creativity in your follow up can go a long way. For example, let's say the employer mentioned something unique in the job description or during the interview...like mentioning they'd eat sushi 24/7 if they could. Your follow up message could include a suggestion for a good sushi place to try around the city. Cleverly working that into your follow-up will make you stand out in a good way, and as a result, perhaps eventually receive a call.

Rule 5: Change it Up

If you're not connecting with someone, try changing it up. In other words, don't send the exact same email at the same time of day on the same day of week. Getting people to respond can sometimes just come down to catching them at the right time. If you always follow up in the morning, maybe try later in the day a few times.

Remember: If someone does ask you to stop following up, stop following up. But until you hear that, it's your responsibility to keep trying.